

# Working of Trade Unions in APSRTC in Srikakulam Region of Andhra Pradesh State

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**Abstract**—Globalisation cannot be battled and it is here to stay. It is an economic reality and threatens the very existence of trade unionism in many countries. With globalisation come various challenges to trade unionism. This paper examines working of trade unions and representation of labour may prove to be particularly crucial in the management of the most innovative organisations like APSRTC. There is a need to focus on organising the unorganised and reach out to the new generation of workers, the e-generation. Delivery of services to members is another key issue. Trade unions need to also reinvent themselves as e-organisations to survive and prosper.

**Keywords**—Recognition, Region, Religion, Transport, Union Relationship

**Abbreviations**—Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC)

## I. INTRODUCTION

AFTER the innovation of the crude oil and its by-products like gasoline, petrol, diesel by Rudolf Diesel from Germany and the introduction of combustion diesel engines, transport systems in the world have been revolutionized. The more organized the economic development of a given region is, the more important transportation becomes. Organized economic activity has to make a very important decision and the decision pertains to the balance between nearness of the production facilities (both of commodities and of services) to the market or to that of the consumers. Therefore, distance becomes a logical problem to be sorted out between the production facilities and the markets where goods and services are sold [Dutta, 1991]. Therefore, transportation becomes a part of the economic problem of any progressive community, to be considered and solved with efficiency as one of its objectives.

### 1.1. Modes of Transport

Based on the medium used for transportation one can classify the entire transportation system into three parts: (a) Land Transport (b) Water Transport and (c) Air Transport. The land transport uses roads and railways to move things and or people from one location to the other. Water transport is necessary and may be used with advantage where a body of water splits two places. Air transport uses the air routes to move things and or people between places. Each of these modes of transport has an associated cost, and suffers from certain limitations. In an economically progressive

community, all the three modes of transport need to be well organized and efficient [Arora, 1987].

Air and water transports are primarily used in the case of exports to other countries since the fixed and establishment costs are heavy compared to that of road and rail transportation. Moreover, the operational costs are also high in the cases of water and rail system and hence longer the distance travelled, the cheaper such mode of transport becomes. While road transport is the least risky and the cheapest mode of transport available, for export across continents, roads are completely unavailable and unthinkable. The requirement for seamless integration among the three modes of transport for carrying out both domestic and international trade becomes much more pronounced when economies become global. Thus, for a growing economy, the problem of transportation is the problem of managing the three modes of transportation efficiently so that boundary-less integration is possible and hence the aforementioned benefits of transport systems be achieved. This management of transportation system essentially requires the building, operating and maintenance of the necessary infrastructure, technology and manpower which in turn must be aligned with economic goals and growth planning of the overall economic system [Chandra & Rajesh, 1991].

### 1.2. Transport Scenario in India

Any attempt to develop the country or to improve the living standards of the people, must begin with the development of villages. But, these villages are physically spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, and no mode of

transport other than road transport using buses can adequately and successfully meet the demand of transport arising out of the growing economic, social, health, cultural and religious needs of the villagers. Thus, an attempt to improve the transport system in the country has to give the highest priority to bus transport system. As said earlier, buses carry more than 80 per cent of public transport in India and rail transport carries less than a third of public transport passengers.

India has nearly 2.55 million kilometers of roads: 1.45 million kilometers of surfaced roads and more than 1 million kilometers of roads constructed of gravel, crushed stone, or earth (Table 3). More than two hundred and ten highways, just under 2000 kilometers in total length, are rated as national highways, but they carry about 40 per cent of the road traffic. The share of transportation investments in total public investment dropped during the period from the early 1950s to the early 1980s; real public transportation investment also declined during much of that period because of the need for funds in the rest of the economy. As a consequence, by the early 1980s the transportation system was barely meeting the needs of the nation or preparing for future economic growth. Many roads, for example, were breaking up because of overuse and lack of maintenance.

To improve road transportation, significant efforts were initiated in the 1980s to build roads to link major highways, to widen the existing roads from single to double lanes, and to construct major bridges. These road-building achievements represent an impressive expansion from the 1950s. However, even though a total of 400,000 kilometers of roads of all kinds have been laid, more than 25 per cent of villages still have no road link, and about 60 per cent have no all-weather road link. These statistics, however, mask important regional variations. Almost all villages in Kerala, Haryana, and Punjab are served by all-weather roads. By contrast, only 15 per cent of villages in Orissa and 21 per cent in Rajasthan are connected with all-weather roads. The quality of roads, including major highways, is low by international standards [Hemsher & David, 1987].

### **1.3. Trade Union Movement**

Trade union is an association of workers formed mainly for the purpose of protecting and promoting economic and social interests of its members through collective action. Trade unionism is the organized expression of the needs, aspirations and attitudes of the working class. It has been traditionally ascribed to workers' organisations, a particular philosophy and function collective representation to protect and encourage the interests of workers within a given socio-economic systems. A trade union is a sub-system which functions within the parameters laid down by the constitution of a country which shapes and conditions their legal existence, continuance and functioning. Trade unions have now gained recognition as Social organisations, which have become an integral part of the contemporary economic scene.

The trade unions have also done well in unionizing for the working class proletariat. The trade unions have also done well in unionizing new groups of hitherto unorganized

workers such as public servants, agricultural workers, white collar workers and professionals like engineers, journalists, doctors and teachers. The inclusion of these constituents in the fold of trade unions has added new dimensions to the trade union movement. Thus a trade union is an association of human beings with status, dignity and personality, and who are also workers. The trade union happens to be a human association at work levels and industry for realization of human aspirations and rights, which include improved wages, better working conditions, more share in the prosperity of the industry and recognition for the human personality from all quarters of the society [Kulkarni, 1978].

## **II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This section briefly reviews the studies on different aspects of road transport connected with the present investigation, directly and indirectly. The review was highly useful to design the present study. Alwin Prakash analysed the physical and financial performance of the Kerala State Transport Corporation during 1959-71 and deduced that the operation of Transport in Kerala was not efficient because of its high vehicle staff-ratio due to under-utilization of transport manpower and fall in kilometre per litre due to bad roads, overloading and incidence of over-aged buses (1977). K. Rajaeshwar Rao and G. Veera Chary made an attempt towards studying the appraisal cost, earnings and profitability of the Warangal division of the Andhra Pradesh Road Transport Corporation for the period 1976-77 to 1983-84 and R.K.Sharma and R.K.Agarwal analysed the working capital management of Rajasthan State Transport Corporation and advocated the overall control and preparation of the working capital budget. They suggested the use of components of current assets, modern techniques of inventory management and cash budgeting.

## **III. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study is focused on the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC), which belong to a highly labour intensive sector employing nearly 1.22 lakh persons. In terms of employment they can be treated among the first few organisations of the State. In terms of usefulness to the development of the State's economy, they occupy a significant position. Among the other State Transport Undertakings of the nation, the Andhra Pradesh State Transport undertakings are well transport undertakings as well as for other public sector undertakings. Therefore the researcher has chosen the State Transport Undertakings of Andhra Pradesh for his investigations. The study deals with trade unionism, the impact of policy directives of government on the functioning of trade unions and the methods of setting grievances in the APSRTC in Srikakulam region.

### 3.1. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the various dimensions of Trade Unionism in APSRTC in Srikakulam region.
2. To analyze Trade Unionism and Industrial Relations in APSRTC in Srikakulam region and

## IV. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

### 4.1. Source of Data

The data for this study have been collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary data have been collected from the employees of APSRTC in Srikakulam region, the Office-bears of the Trade Unions and the Officials of APSRTC in Srikakulam region. The secondary data have been collected from the internal office records of the Ministry of State Transport, Published reports of the Department of Statistics, Government of Andhra Pradesh and Books and Journals.

### 4.2. Sample Design

For the purpose of this study the researcher has used the stratified random sampling method. The researcher has also employed the survey research method for which data have been collected by interviewing randomly selected trade union leaders and officials of APSRTC in Srikakulam region. Seventy Five samples from union officer bears and fifty samples from management personnel were selected through convenient sample technique. The union leaders and officials were from depots to Head office level of the State Transport Corporations in Srikakulam region.

### 4.3. Limitations of the Study

This study covers only APSRTC in Srikakulam region, though this could not be taken as demonstrative of whole Andhra Pradesh State Transport undertakings. This is only a sample survey in a limited area for a specific time period of one year i.e. 2011-12. Hence, the generalization of findings must be done with care. The study is based on workers', union leaders and official perceptions are subject to change in the days to come. Therefore, the respondents reveal their current observations on the role of trade unions and industrial relations in Srikakulam region.

## V. WORKING OF TRADE UNIONS IN APSRTC IN SRIKAKULAM REGION

In this study the working of trade union movement in the APSRTC in Srikakulam regions are analysed.

### 5.1. Recognition

This part analyses the recognition of unions and the methods by which unions are recognized. Table 1 shows the number of trade unions recognized.

Table 1 – Recognition of Trade Unions

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
<b>Recognized</b>	254	84.7
<b>Not recognized</b>	46	15.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Regarding recognition, 254 respondents (84.7 per cent) said that their unions were recognized and 46 respondents (15.3 per cent) said their unions were not recognized. This opinion is on general recognition, not on the method of recognition followed by the undertakings, inviting the unions for wages negotiations. For wage negotiation, the recognition is done on the basis of the secret ballot system. In the secret ballot system a minimum of 10 per cent of the votes polled is required to send a representative to participate in the negotiation.

### 5.2. Multiple Regression Analysis

To examine the relationship between recognition of trade unions (dependent variable) and Inter-union Relations, Intra – Union Relations and impact of new management Strategies (Independent variables) multiple regression analysis was used. The results are given in Table 2.

1. Those who believed to have closer relationship among the associations are likely to believe that the court's decision was wrong. (0.35).
2. Those who believed to have closer relationship among members within the association are likely to believe that the court's decision was right. (0.46).
3. The greater realization of adverse effect of new management strategy the higher the probability of realizing of the decision of the court was wrong. (0.26).

Table 2 – Multiple Regression Analysis on Recognition of Trade Unions

Independent Variable	Chi- square Value	Probability Value	Regression Value
<b>Inter – union relations</b>	4.6718	0.02788	-0.35219
<b>Intra – union relations</b>	10.4211	0.00118	0.46471
<b>Impact of new management strategies</b>	9.1516	0.00256	-0.26421

### 5.3. Inter- Union and Intra – Union Relations

For a trade union, the relationship with other friendly unions is very important. This kind of inter-union relationship will help the members to achieve common demands. Table 3 shows the inter-union relationship.

Table 3 – Inter - Union Relationship - Employees

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	73	24.30
<b>To some extent</b>	197	65.70
<b>Less</b>	28	9.30
<b>Much less</b>	-	-
<b>Nil</b>	2	0.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.00</b>

It is evident that 197 respondents (65.7 per cent) believed that inter-union relations were maintained to some extent and 73 respondents (24.3 per cent) said that the inter-union relations were total. 28 respondents (9.3 per cent) were of the view that the inter-union relations were loss. Three respondents (0.7 per cent) opined that there was no inter-union relationship.

Table 4 – Inter – Union Relationship – Trade Union Office-bears and Management Personnel

Response	Respondents			
	TU Office-Bears	Percentage	Mgt. Personnel	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	60	80	25	50.0
<b>To some extent</b>	9	12	17	34.0
<b>Average</b>	6	8	7	14.0
<b>Less</b>	-	-	1	2.0
<b>Much less</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

When the trade union office bears and the management personnel were asked about the relationship between one union and another, 60 (80 per cent) of the trade union office bears stated that the trade unions were having total cordial relationship with other trade unions, nine (12 per cent) of the trade union office bears said that the relationship was to some extent and six (8 per cent) trade union office bears stated that the relationship was at an average level.

Among the management personnel 25 (50 per cent) stated that the trade union were having total cordial relationship with other trade unions, 17 (34.0 per cent) the relationship was to some extent, seven (14 per cent) opined that the relationship was at an average level and one (2.0 per cent) said that the trade unions had less relationship.

Here both the majority of the trade union office bears as well as the management personnel were of the opinion that the trade unions had cordial relationship with other trade unions totally. Table 5 shows the intra – union relations.

Table 5 – Intra – Union Relationship (Within Members) - Employees

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
<b>Very good</b>	122	40.7
<b>Good</b>	127	42.3
<b>Average</b>	42	14.0
<b>Poor</b>	8	2.7
<b>Very poor</b>	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.00</b>

It is seen from the table that 127 respondents (42.3 per cent) claimed good relationship between members, 122 respondents (40.7 per cent) states that the relationship was very good and 42 respondents (14 per cent) believed that there was average relationship. Eight respondents (2.7 per cent) opined that the relationship between members was poor and one respondent (0.3 per cent) said that the intra-union relationship was very poor.

#### 5.4. Caste / Religion in Trade Unions

A full account of class consciousness and trade unions in the Indian context includes a consideration of caste as well. The inclusion of a new class consciousness is considered revolutionary. In rural communities, people are more conscious of their caste ranks. The class consciousness wherever found is short lived but even among the Urban Industrial workers caste and class are found to coexist. Caste consciousness is essentially a result of the sentiment belonging to a particular caste group. Caste consciousness is reflected through attitudes towards and tendency to support and help one's own caste people irrespective of other considerations. Caste consciousness pervades voting behaviour in general as well as in trade union elections and in occupation.

The best trade union is a democratic union, which gives no importance to any caste or religion. The researcher has made an attempt to know about the role of case or religion in unions. Table 6 gives some details. This table reveals that out of 252 respondents the majority of the respondents that is (86.9 per cent) stated that caste or religion is not given importance in their unions. Only 33 (13.1 per cent) opined that caste and religion had importance in trade unions. However it is a fact that the communal elements play a role in trade unions, as things stand today.

Table 6 – Caste and Religion in Trade Union

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
<b>Caste and religion important</b>	33	13.1
<b>Caste and religion not important</b>	219	86.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>100.00</b>

#### 5.5. Fulfillment of Members' Expectations

The main aim of a trade union is to fulfill the members' demands. The opinions of sample respondents on the question of fulfillment of expectations of members are given in table 7.

Table 7 – Members Expectations Vs Performance

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	92	30.70
<b>To some extent</b>	172	57.30
<b>Less</b>	35	11.70
<b>Much less</b>	1	0.30
<b>Nil</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.00</b>

It is clear from the table that 172 respondents (57.3 per cent) employees were of the view that the unions fulfilled their members' expectations to some extent, 92 respondents (30.7 per cent) felt that the fulfillment was to the fullest extent and 69 respondents (11.5 per cent) put it as less.

Table 8 – Members' Expectations Vs Union's Achievements

Response	Respondents			
	TU Office-Bears	Percentage	Mgt. Personnel	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	60	80	8	16.0
<b>To some extent</b>	12	16	34	68.0
<b>Average</b>	3	4	8	16.0
<b>Less</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Much less</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

When the trade union office bears and the management personnel were asked that as to what extent the trade unions satisfied their members' expectations, 60 (80 per cent) of the trade union office bears said that the trade unions satisfied their members' expectations totally, 12 (16 per cent) of the trade union office bears expressed that the trade unions declared that the satisfaction was to some extent and three (4 per cent) of the trade union office-bears said that the satisfaction was at an average level.

At the same time when the management personnel were asked, eight (16.0 per cent) of the management personnel said that the trade unions satisfied their members' expectations totally, 34 (68 per cent) said that satisfaction was to some extent and eight (16.0 per cent) felt that the satisfaction level of average. Here, a majority of the trade union office bears stated that the trade unions were satisfying their members' expectation totally. But majority of the management personnel said that the trade unions were satisfying their members' expectations to some extent only. Table 9 throws light on the involvement of trade unions in the redressal of members' grievances.

Table 9 – Intra – Union Relationship (Within Members) - Employees

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	132	44.00
<b>To some extent</b>	150	50.00
<b>Less</b>	3	1.00
<b>Much less</b>	0	0
<b>Nil</b>	15	5.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The table shows that 150 respondents (50 per cent) believed that to some extent the unions were involved in redressing members' grievances; 44 per cent (132 respondents) of sample respondents thought that there was total involvement.

### 5.6. Study Findings

In the new system of union recognition, only a few trade unions got the chance of participating in wage negotiations. The study reveals that this new method of recognition has emphasised the need for unrecognized trade unions to strengthen themselves. There seems to be no alternative method. The study refers that the trade unions had cordial relationship with one another at an above-the- average level, as accepted by 90 percent of the employee respondents, 92

per cent of the trade union office-bears respondents and 83.4 per cent of the management personnel respondents.

According to the study that the relationship within the member as of the trade unions also was very cordial or at an above the average level as stated by more than 83 percent of the employee respondents, 90 per cent of the trade union office-bears respondents and more than 81 per cent of the management personnel respondents. The study shows that the reasons for inter-union conflict were the perceived difference in union and political difference. Among the employee respondents 39.5 per cent opined that difference in union activities was the reasons for inter-union conflict and 36.5 percent opined that political difference was the reason for inter-union conflict. Among the trade union office-bearer respondents 64 per cent opined that political difference as the reason for inter-union conflict and 16 per cent opined that difference in union activities was the reason for inter-union conflict. Among the management personnel respondents, 46.7 per cent opined that political difference was the reason for inter-union conflict and 26.7 per cent stated that difference in union activities was the reasons for inter-union conflict. So, in total both political differences and the differences in union activities were the reasons for inter-union conflict.

The study shows that there is no role to the Caste / Religion based trade unions and 89 percent of the employee respondents stated that the trade unions gave no importance to Caste / Religion. The study reveals that the trade unions satisfied the members' expectations at an above-the-average level as stated by, 88 percent of the employee respondents, 96 per cent of the trade union office-bears respondents and 86 per cent of the management personnel respondents. So, it can be concluded that the trade union satisfied their members' expectations at above-the-average level.

## VI. SUGGESTIONS

The study has a few suggestions to improve the management labour relations in the APSRTC in Srikakulam region.

1. Management should convene monthly meeting of workers in every branch to promote better understanding and cordial relationship between the workers and the management.
2. Joint Meeting of Management and Workers should be convened periodically to discuss problems relating to the workers. A committee may be constituted for this purpose.
3. Three important things namely, Education, Technical performance and Enforcement of regulations are essential for the successful management of a transport corporation. But, in APSRTC in Srikakulam region enforcement of regulations alone tops the list. These three things should be properly attend to.
4. Management should be sympathetic to the legitimate grievance of the workers. It should be respect their sentiments and efficiency. It should carry out the Government orders and implement them without delay.

Discrimination while taking action against workers should be avoided.

5. Promotions should be sanctioned without delay, and work allotment should take into account the seniority of the workers. Negotiations should be the means of solving problems.
6. The role of trade unions also requires complete orientation. They should look after all the aspects of labour welfare. They should be concentrating not only on pay and bonus packages, but also on social and educational aspects. They should fight for a fair treatment to all the workers, without fear or favour.
7. Workers should not be punished for minor mistakes. Suspension and increment cuts should be resorted to only when absolutely necessary. Proper incentives should be given to sincere and efficient workers.
8. APSRTC region should maintain its buses in good condition. New buses should be introduced by replacing old ones. This should increase the efficiency of the drivers.
9. Collective bargaining should be encouraged. Government conciliation and arbitration machinery should be made available to the workers when necessary. The Government should take steps to make workers participation in the management effective. This will develop a sense of belonging in the workers.

## VII. CONCLUSION

It is a recognized fact that the greatest asset of any concern lies in the potential of the people who operate it. Andhra Pradesh State Transport Corporation is a public utility, concern operating under Government regulations and trade union influences. The trade unions in the State Transport Undertakings are in a good condition. The members are well-versed with the trade union movement. At present the changing economic environment poses new challenges to the trade unions of the State Transport Undertakings. The trade unions should be a cautious blend of what is relevant in the existing set up and the new for the future. The management of the State Transport Undertakings should also develop healthy programmes to strengthen the trade union movement, through various schemes and activities.

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